enemy. Units sent to reinforce the front lines felt encircled and lost, and the commanders ordered their men to dig in or fall back, reporting to the corps that they had given these orders in view of the enemy's overwhelming superiority in firepower. Meanwhile our batteries got lost somewhere in the forests and marshes or fell back because of lack of infantry protection.

There was no rout like that in the south in July. The troops retreated in order, carrying their wounded and munitions, blowing up the bridges. But the enemy advanced steadily. I was bewildered and could not piece the reports together. Boldyrev and Simonov were grim but not discouraged. "Such things have happened before," Simonov repeated. "It is too early to judge the situation. The enemy seems to be overextending his lines. The tide may turn."

New reports poured in. The tide had not turned, the Germans were widening their pocket, our troops were falling back. Boldyrev said to me, "Now they will brand our soldiers as cowards and traitors. . . . An army can stand a reverse so long as it keeps its self-confidence, but if we let the enemy kill its spirit, all is lost. . . ."

As soon as communication with Riga was restored, I wired to General Parsky, the President of the government, the War Department, and Chkheidze: "On September 1, after hurricane artillery fire, the enemy crossed the Dvina. Most of our batteries covering the river were put out of action or destroyed. . . . Our troops were pushed back four miles on a stretch some six miles wide. Reinforcements are being sent to restore the situation. I testify before the nation: There was no disgrace in our reverse. The troops executed all orders loyally, attacking the enemy with bayonets and braving death. No instances of flight or treason have been reported by field commanders."

Before sending the telegram I showed it to Boldyrev. He hugged and kissed me, saying, "Every word is true. Thank you."

During the night of September 1, we waited for the report from General Scalon. His division occupied the position left of the 186th, and Boldyrev had ordered it to attack the enemy forces that had crossed the river on its flank. The order was duly acknowledged, but nothing was heard from the general. None of the messengers sent to him had returned. I told Boldyrev I would try to reach the division by a detour. The difficulty was in driving without lights over roads that had been under fire throughout the entire day, but I relied on my chauffeur and he did not fail me. I do not know how he found his way in almost complete darkness but, after two hours of breakneck driving, we found the division, still in its old position. It had been reinforced by a few companies from the 186th Division, but its right wing hung in the air; beyond was a dark, silent forest, with no sign of German troops or of ours.